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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 009861

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SUBJECT: PAPUA: GOVERNORS SWORN IN, SBY VISITS

REF: JAKARTA 9161 (PAPUAN POLITICAL ROUND-UP)

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Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Daniel E. Turnbull. Reason 1
.4 (b, d)

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Summary. The directly-elected governors of West Irian Jaya and Papua were sworn in without incident on July 24 and 25, respectively. The inaugurations mark the end of a long period of strife over the partition of Papua and the outcome of the March 10 direct elections. President Yudhoyono's goodwill visit to Jayapura and Yahukimo regency July 26-29 emphasized themes of development and welfare. End Summary.

Governors Sworn In

[¶2.](#) (U) On July 24, Indonesian Home Affairs Minister Mohammad Ma'aruf swore in Abraham O. Atururi and Rahimin Katjong as Governor and Vice Governor of West Irian Jaya province. The pair had won the March 10 direct elections on the PDI-P ticket with a lopsided majority. The swearing-in was held in Manokwari, the provincial capitol.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) Shortly before the inauguration, Jimmy Ijie, the speaker of West Irian Jaya's Provincial Assembly, announced that the body would soon take action to change the province's name to West Papua (Propinsi Papua Barat). This proposal, supported by all candidates in the direct election campaign, is symbolically meaningful in that it replaces the New Order-era term Irian Jaya. The change would be approved by provincial authorities, then forwarded to the central government.

[¶4.](#) (SBU) On July 25, Ma'aruf swore in Barnabas ("Bas") Suebu and Alex Hesegem as Governor and Vice Governor of Papua in a ceremony in Jayapura. The incoming governor promised to address the problem of unresponsive bureaucrats in provincial government and to resolve tribal disputes such as the one ongoing in Timika regency, which has cost several lives. In a speech at the inauguration, Provincial Parliament Speaker John Ibo, who had previously sought to block Suebu's installation as governor (reftel para 3), stated that he was willing to end the feud in the interests of Papuan society. Despite lingering concern that supporters of defeated candidate Lukas Enembe might stage a protest, the inauguration went off smoothly.

[¶5.](#) (C) Suebu's swearing-in was attended by West Irian Jaya Governor Atururi, likely signaling an end to the simmering conflict between the two provinces' elites. Suebu's

predecessor Jaap Solossa had refused to acknowledge the validity of West Irian Jaya's creation, and was backed in this by the Papuan People's Assembly (Majles Rakyat Papua, MRP). Even before the swearing-in, there were indications that the dispute was winding down. In mid-July, delegations from Papua, West Irian Jaya, and the MRP held an amicable meeting on the island of Biak where it was agreed to request a committee of experts from Cendrawasih and Papua Universities to make recommendations on solving certain problems of the Special Autonomy Law. An associate of Suebu told poloff July 15 that Suebu had a good rapport with Governor Atururi. The two men have known each other since Suebu's previous term as appointed governor of Papua and Atururi's term as regent of Sorong.

Yudhoyono Visits Papua

¶6. (U) President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) visited Jayapura, Wamena and Pasema on July 26-29. In Jayapura, he was accompanied by his wife and a large delegation including Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Aburizal Bakrie, Armed Forces Commander In Chief Marshall Djoko Suyanto, State Minister for Underdeveloped Regions Syaefullah Yusuf, Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari, Agriculture Minister Anton Apriyanto, Transportation Minister Hatta Rajasa, Social Affairs Minister Bachtiar Hamzah, and Home Affairs Minister Mohammad Ma'aruf.

¶7. (SBU) In Jayapura, Yudhoyono met for the first time with members of the MRP. Previously, SBY had deflected their requests for meetings, referring them instead to Vice President Kalla. SBY's discussions with both the MRP and Governor Suebu apparently centered on implementation of the Special Autonomy law. In his public remarks, SBY acknowledged that the law, which has to date resulted in

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11 trillion rupiah into provincial and regency coffers, must be implemented in a transparent way, so that society would understand how it was being used and not suspect embezzlement. He said that three years after its enactment, it was time for the law to be reviewed to see how it could be better implemented. Contrary to expectations (ref A paras 8-11), SBY did not announce his "New Deal" policy as such during the trip, but discussed acceleration of development only in general terms.

¶8. (SBU) In the mountainous regency of Yahukimo, SBY visited Wamena and Pasema, where his program highlighted welfare and development issues. He and the First Lady visited schools, toured agricultural projects, inaugurated a hydroelectric plant, and in Pasema attended a harvest festival. Announcing that the isolated area had overcome the ordeal of the failed harvest that had led to 83 deaths from malnutrition last year, SBY formally dissolved the interdepartmental working group that had been formed to address the crisis. In Wamena, SBY said that he was accelerating construction of the new highway connecting the city to Jayapura. At present, 150 kilometers of the 500-kilometer road remained to be completed, he said.

¶9. (SBU) SBY deflected calls for creation of a Central Papuan province centered on Jayawijaya Regency. Among those calling for the creation of such a province were Jayawijaya Regent Nicholas Jigibalom and supporters of defeated gubernatorial candidate Lukas Enembe, a favorite son of the region. Implicitly acknowledging the controversy touched off by former President Megawati's creation of West Irian Jaya and aborted formation of Central Papua, SBY responded that creation of new provinces could not be undertaken hastily, but rather must be studied carefully and factor in the concerns of all involved parties.

¶10. (U) A planned opening of a road connecting Papua with Papua New Guinea, in which PNG Prime Minister Sir Michael

Somare was to have participated, was cancelled at the last minute, reportedly at the request of the PNG side. The GOI said that the cancellation was due to "technical reasons," not because of concerns about security of the border area. The TNI has reportedly stepped up patrols of the border area and cooperation with the Papua New Guinea military since an attack, allegedly by separatist OPM guerillas, on TNI forces in the village of Wembi earlier this year.

¶11. (C) Comment. The inauguration of the two governors marks the end of a period of strife and indirection in Papuan politics. 2005 was marked by feuding among the elites over the partition of Papua into two provinces. With the MRP now apparently resigned to the existence of West Irian Jaya, and with the swearing-in of two governors who apparently get along well, this conflict will likely subside. The inaugurations also end months of acrimony surrounding the result of Papua's March 10 direct elections. SBY's visit is a welcome gesture of goodwill despite its apparent absence of real substance. Like his Christmas visit in 2004, it shows his continued personal interest, in contrast to the approach of President Megawati, who allowed her ministers to devise conflicting policies that left Papuans disappointed and angry. End comment.
PASCOE